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Seeding Prosperity with Vouchers



Photo: IRD/AVIPA Plus

Farmer beneficiaries at a USAID/AVIPA Plus voucher distribution center in Nad-e Ali district load sacks of fertilizers onto the wagon of their tractor. They will also receive appropriate training, as well as various vegetable seeds, plastic sheeting, and steel hoops for setting up low tunnels on their farms.

The Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture Plus (AVIPA Plus) distribution of vegetable seed, fertilizers, and vegetable row cover material in Nad-e Ali district is helping bring a new level of prosperity to thousands of farmers in this central district of Hilmand province, Afghanistan.

The distribution, which began at the end of March, will reach 4,000 farmers. The vegetable seeds, fertilizers, and row cover components have a combined value of nearly \$3 million.

Row cover material is usually a lightweight synthetic, such as clear plastic, placed directly above rows of crops on a supporting framework, often wire hoops, to form a low tunnel. The low tunnels will help farmers extend the growing season by allowing them to plant earlier in the

spring and grow later in the fall. This will increase farmers' profits by allowing them to bring vegetables to market outside of the peak season.

The tunnels will provide the farmers with additional income that will enable them to reinvest in improved seed next season or in infrastructure projects on their farms - or simply build their savings - all of which will increase stability in this region of Afghanistan.